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THE RAGTIMER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1976

PUBLISHED BY
THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

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INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

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Use the attached
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The November/December 1976
issue of THE RAGTIMER
will be the final one
mailed to 1976 members.

RAGTIME...

UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY was founded at the beginning of 1962. Our 15th anniversary commences with the year 1977. We have enjoyed 15 years of participation in the great ragtime revival which grew steadily from the start and thrived so vigourously in the present decade. Our solid identification with that revival did not happen by accident. THE SOCIETY cannot and does not exist in a vacuum. YOU are the reason behind our survival over those 15 years.

The loyal support of so many long-term members, and the even greater number of later members who stuck with THE SOCIETY once they had joined, made it all possible. We are mindful of the members who gave so much of themselves over the years and of those who continue to do so in a direct way. It is a moment of general appreciation for all the individual efforts which have sustained THE RAGTIME SOCIETY over its lifetime.

To live on and to be ready for a whole new generation of young musicians who will discover ragtime in the course of their musical explorations, THE SOCIETY will continue to require your "undying" support.

Another ragtime year is about to begin. 1977 is only weeks away. Our cost of operations has been rising sharply despite our frugal approach. Nevertheless we are holding the annual membership fee at $8.00 in the hope that our funds will be replenished quickly as the result of prompt renewals.

(continued on page 4)

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PLEASE RENEW YOUR SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FOR 1977 PRIOR TO THE END OF 1976. THE FORM IS ATTACHED.

Many of our members have done a great job of enlisting new members. Is it your turn to enlist a new member ?

We draw your attention to the list of music folios on page 2 of this issue of THE RAGTIMER which are offered for sale. Some are already out of print or otherwise unavailable. Are you up-to-date on these and the back copies of THE RAGTIMER?

HOWARD J. ANGEL of Michigan and PETER LUNDBERG of Sweden, as observer and performer respectively, are responsible for the providing of extensive information about the Bicentennial Ragtime Festival at Carthage, Missouri. The festival took place May 29, 30, 31, 1976. Details of the event and some background information are covered for record purposes in this issue of THE RAGTIMER.

Ragtimers are looking forward to viewing an upcoming TV Special: NBC's TV movie "SCOTT JOPLIN - KING OF RAGTIME". Joseph Finnigan writing in TV Guide reports that the cast includes CLIFTON DAVIS, CAB CALLOWAY, GODFREY CAMBRIDGE and EUBIE BLAKE. He mentions that the 93 year old pianist Eubie Blake is one of a few musicians still alive who knew Joplin. Eubie had a recent engagement at Colorado Springs in connection with Dick Gibson's Jazz Weekend at The Broadmoor. Member GERRY VONDY of Denver reported that she was able to enjoy a pleasant reunion with Marion and Eubie during their stay in Colorado.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ of Denmark is playing ragtime piano which appeals to a wider audience as time goes by. In late August he did a program for TV Radio Denmark. He was also scheduled to play at the JAZZ FESTIVAL in Frankfurt, Germany, on October 8 to 10th this year.

Here in Canada we are proud of the growing success of our instrumental group THE CANADIAN BRASS. Members are aware of their fine recording of classical ragtime and many were present when they electrified the Bash gathering last year with their artistry and humour. A few of their upcoming appearances will be October 24 at Erindale College, Mississauga, Ont. - Oct. 28/29 with the Decatur Orchestra, Decatur, Ill. - Nov. 2 with Galt Concert Society, Cambridge, Ont. - Nov. 17 with the Hamilton Philharmonic, Hamilton, Ont. - Nov. 20 at the St. George's Theatre, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. - and from Dec. 2 to 8 will be appearing in New York City, N. Y.

Incidentally, fans of EUBIE BLAKE will find a fine article about Eubie in the October, 1976, issue of "American Heritage". The article is authored by fellow-ragtimer MAX MORATH.

If you are near or visiting New York City in late October, don't miss out on the big gala ragtime event publicized by DAVE JASEN for Saturday Evening, Saturday, October 30th, 1976 at Dome Auditorium, C. W. Post Campus on Northern Blvd., Long Island, N. Y. Dick Wellstood, St. Louis Ragtimers, Bob Seeley, Dick Hyman, Joe "Fingers" Carr, and the team of Neville Dickie (England) and Dave Jasen (USA) give promise of a talent-loaded program.

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RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Vanguard SRV 351SD 'The World Of Scott Joplin, Volume 2', piano solos by Max Morath.

Selections: Magnetic Rag, The Easy Winners, Eubie's Classical Rag, Pleasant Moments, Wall Street Rag, Bird-Brain Rag, Echoes Of The Rosebud, Evergreen Rag, Hot-House Rag, Through Eden's Gates, Paragon Rag, One For Norma.

Max again hits the bull's-eye on "Eubie's" (optimistic, singing, pulsing), "Evergreen" and "Hot-House" (both strutters) and "Eden's" (Bill Bolcom's cakewalk in a brilliant, surprisingly slow interpretation that focuses on its lovely melody and compelling emotional build). The rest of the disc, however, though well recorded and cleanly played, seems to have captured Morath on a rare off-day: 1) "Bird-Brain", with its jazzy phrasing, rushed tempo and omitted repeats, is a pale shadow of Lamb's masterpiece; 2) Max seems barely involved with the five Joplin titles, which are filled with pointless melodic deviations from the scores; 3) the too-careful, lifeless readings of "Magnetic" and "Pleasant" occupy one extreme of the spectrum from the jarringly boisterous approach used to close out "Wall Street" and to get into "Paragon". Rounding out the program are "Echoes", Max's wistful medley of themes from several classic rags, which works well enough, and Max's own work "Norma", passionate and romantic, but also rambling and lacking in backbone. Morath is one of ragtime's few real stars, a position he richly deserves, and most readers of this column will automatically buy his records and be glad to do so - but this one doesn't offer as much value as its predecessors.

* * *

Vanguard SRV 350SD 'Classic Rags' by Paul Zukofsky, violin, and Robert Dennis, piano.

Selections: Pork And Beans, Felicity Rag, Slippery Elm Rag, Grandfather's Clock, Calliope Rag, American Beauty, Magnetic Rag, Sleepy Hollow Rag, The Easy Winners, Stoptime Rag.

Side One of this disc deserves all the superlatives in the book - beautifully recorded, impeccably executed, assembled with taste and skill from the rip-roaring "Pork" through the lovely, yearning "Slippery" into the high-stepping "Calliope". Zukofsky and Dennis produce a surprisingly full-bodied ensemble (especially with Zukofsky's ability to play complete right-hand parts including the harmony or countermelody), using imaginative interplay to build up the repeats and fully realize the potential of the scores, which faithfully follow the original piano solo routines.

Side Two is not quite as good, though "Magnetic" is given a brilliantly rousing reading that shakes off its more customary solemnity and "Sleepy", with a shimmering violin treble, vividly evokes the hollow on a lazy, sun-baked afternoon; by comparison, however, "American" and "Easy" are competent but nothing special, while "Stoptime" - obviously an encore-type number not to be taken seriously - is musically a total loss, notable only for racing through the entire score in the record time of 119 seconds flat. But the rhythm urges, the team remembers to keep the juice flowing and the mood zestful, and the music soars often enough for me to commend this album to you as no worse than A-minus.

* * *

Jazzology JCE-58 "The Saga Of Vic Filmer"

Selections: The Naked Dance, Red Pepper Rag, Rotten Row Rag, Canadian Capers, Haunting Rag, Mean To Me, Dance Of The Clue-less Clot, The Kandy Rag, Pickle Pack Porkers Parade, Skyscraper March. All titles are piano solos recorded about 1970 except "Skyscraper", which is an undated recording by the New York City Department of Sanitation Band.

Available @ $6.98 (U.S. residents) from Collector's Record Club, 3008 Wadsworth Mill Place, Decatur, Georgia 30032.

All numbers are preceded by a spoken introduction, usually a reminiscence by Filmer, who tells us that, as a 16-year old working in a music store in 1910, he was frequently invited to perform for house parties, thereby becoming one of the first pianists to introduce ragtime to British society. His stories from his lifelong career as a musician are not without some interest in terms of painting a picture of the turn-of-the-century scene in England; moreover, "Clot", "Kandy" and "Porkers" indicate that he could compose with a certain flair for novelty-rag-type syncopation. As for the playing, well, it's a bit rusty - execution labored, rhythm forced - though it has flashes of what once may have been; unfortunately, the living-room-spinet-played-into-home-tape-recorder sound quality would prevent any tickler from appearing at his best. Clearly intended as a documentary album for ragtime historians rather than for general listening.

* * *

Columbia M 33706 "Charleston", by Dick Hyman, piano (organ on "If I Could Be With You"), arranger and leader.

Personnel: (a) - Dance Band: Mel Davis, Joe Wilder, trumpets; Bob Wilber, Phil Bodner, Romeo Penque, reeds; Buddy Morrow, trombone; Hyman; Everett Barksdale, banjo; Bob Haggart, bass; Bob Rosengarden, drums.

(b) - Jazz Band: Ruby Braff, cornet; Wilber; Vic Dickenson, trombone; Hyman; Barksdale, Haggart; Rosengarden.

(c) - Theater Orchestra: Davis, Pee Wee Erwin, trumpets; Bodner, Don Hammond, Harvey Estrin, reeds; Morrow, Paul Faulice, trombones; David Nadien, Julius Schacter, Manny Green, Joe Malin, Harold Kohon, violins; Selwart Clarke, viola; Charles McCracken, cello; Hyman; Barksdale, banjo and guitar; Milt Hinton, bass; Rosengarden.

Selections: Charleston (a), If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight (Braff-Hyman duet), Caprice Rag (piano solo), Selections From "Runnin' Wild" (c), Snowy Morning Blues (Braff-Hyman duet), Steeplechase Rag (b), Eccentricity (c), Carolina Balmoral (b), Just Before Daybreak (Braff-Hyman duet), Jingles (a), Carolina Shout (b), You've Got To Be Modernistic (a).

This is a strangely conceived album in that it concentrates on James P. Johnson as a composer rather than pianist, presenting his works mostly in full band versions, yet it ignores Johnson's program pieces, his other serious works and all but a few of his pop tunes in favor of a program drawn primarily from numbers originally designed to showcase his virtuoso solo tickling. Many tracks thus feature Hyman's excellent piano, accompanied by the rhythm, on one or more of the strains, the remaining time given over to a few hot horn solos or some building riffs that often underscore the call-and-response pattern frequently found in Johnson's rags. Most tracks sound darn good (exceptions: "Caprice" - way too fast; "Steeplechase" - overfrantic; "Charleston" and "Selections" - dull), the duets with Braff being especially choice in the musicians' blend of ideas and in Braff's genius at gently and lyrically developing the best features of the material. Because sounding good is the name of the game in making records, and because many of the titles are seldom-heard gems, I find this a generally attractive Lp with special appeal to fans of Harlem stride.

* * *

American Jazz AJ-123 "Jazz: Blues & Stomps", piano solos by Mark Hess.

Selections: Rosetta; Medley: Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now, Ain't Misbehavin'; Aspirin Rag; In The Dark; Mark's Mood; Forever Clear; The Giggle Wiggle; Handful Of Keys; Garage Blues; Doubting; Blue, Turning Grey Over You; Singin' The Blues; Stealin' Apples.

Available from American Jazz Recording Company, 522 River Walk, San Antonio, Texas 78205.

In 1973, at age 20, Hess won a contest to determine the "Texas Ragtime Champion"; this Lp, recorded two years later in superb fidelity, shows why. Hess' technique is accurate and impressive, his sound is big and two-fisted, and his lines are richly voiced in keeping with his Harlem stride approach. Hess is at his best interpreting his own works - "Aspirin" and "Giggle" being short, riffy, flashy cutting contest stompers, "Doubting" a meaty medium-fast swinger, "Mood" and "Forever", though funkier, more relaxed and contemporary in approach, still braced by solid left-hand rhythm; on other composers' material, his hands tend to outrun his ideas, particularly on longer tracks which usually do not build effectively or develop much depth. Overall, the disc makes a decent enough investment in itself while offering promise of a lot of hard-hitting piano yet to come.

* * *

Moon MLP 200 'The Harvest Hop' by The Etcetera String Band.

Personnel: Pat Ireland, violin; Dennis Pash, mandolin; Kevin Sanders, guitar.

Selections: Doc Brown's Cake Walk, Georgia Echoes, With Fire And Sword, Some

Pumpkins, Iola, Twinkles, A Coon Band Contest, Gallant Hearts, Southern Beauties, Glad Smiles, All The Candy, Porcupine Rag.

Available @ $5. 25 postpaid (U. S. residents) from Moon Records, P. O. Box 4001, Kansas City, Kansas 66104.

These rags, cakewalks, lightly syncopated marches, and other period material, all by white composers from Kansas City (five titles by Charles L. Johnson, four by E. Harry Kelly) are perfectly at home in these jubilant, down-homey renditions by three contemporary Kansas Citians. Ireland and Pash generally alternate on melody or double it while Sanders chugs out the rhthym and occasional left-hand lines from the published scores, everything being executed with accuracy, precision and confidence yet retaining the back-alley earthiness that one would expect of music from the turn-of-the-century midwestern frontier. If the piano versions of these bucolic, unpretentious tunes, with their frequent use of single-note treble, sometimes seem too open and simple for that relatively sophisticated instrument, they are gorged with hearty vitality and unconfined joy in the swirling, high-spirited sound of a good (make that "outstanding") string ensemble. Recorded with remarkable presence, the album offers a lot that's new to ragtime Lps - the instrumentation, the program, the research on the K. C. scene covered in Pash's fascinating enclosed booklet - and all of it an unqualified success. Recommended with feverish enthusiasm.

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RAGTIME FESTIVAL HELD AT CARTHAGE, MISSOURI

MAY 29, 30, 31, 1976

This Festival was a Bicentennial Event which paid special tribute to ragtime composers James Sylvester Scott and H. Clarence Woods who both spent a number of years as residents of Carthage. Located in the south-west corner of Missouri, Carthage (pop. 11000) and Joplin in Jasper County and Neosho in Newton County (where Scott was born) together form a close-in triangle of short distances. Carthage was founded in 1842. The principal ragtime performers were: Steve Spracklen and his sister Susan Spracklen who are both from nearby Joplin, "Ragtime Bob" Darch of Newtonia, Mo., Peter Lundberg of Sweden, Ray Rose formerly of Carthage and Tom Fahrig a native of Joplin. The Et. Cetera String Band also contributed to the outdoor concert work. The serious events took place in Carthage Memorial Hall each evening. The works of James Scott and Clarence Woods received special attention.

This report is made possible through the help of Peter Lundberg, who wrote up his impressions in a letter, and Howard Angel who sent the Society a copy of the official program and the Commemorative Edition Newspaper published by Carthage Press. A copy of this newspaper edition can be purchased by mail for $1. 00 from Carthage Press, Carthage, Missouri. Marvin Vangilder is congratulated on the tremendous one-man job he did in collecting, writing, and editing all the ragtime material used by Carthage Press for the special commemorative edition. Excerpts will follow the report by Peter Lundberg, and will illustrate the thoroughness of Marvin Vangilder's research.

CARTHAGE RAGTIME FESTIVAL REVIEW

BY PETER LUNDBERG

Your May/June issue carries a rather terse note on the Carthage Bicentennial Ragtime Festival complete with suggestions for a report. Since I was eventually one of the partakers, here goes.

As mentioned, the proceedings were to honor the two musicians that put Carthage on the ragtime map: James Scott and Clarence Woods. The main feature of the three days was to have been Bob Darch, Susan Cordell (nee Spracklen) and me doing every Scott rag at least once plus the few Woods solos, and of course a few extras including a three-piano act. To round things out, Tom Fahrig would keep things going on his banjo and vocal cords in between sets, there would be Ray Rose doing emceeing and the nostalgia bit, and there was to be local barbershopping of Take Me Out To Lakeside. So much for planning. The idea was a bit too ambitious for a small-town bicentennial. After all, people are entitled to their fun and even us die-hards have to admit that sitting through three nights of more-or-less James Scott takes dedication and perseverance. So this is why we started out the first night more or less as planned, but as things proceeded we decided to switch things around and so turned the thing into a more general fun ragtime affair. From an audience point the thing was a success: the memorial hall being mostly filled all three evenings, reception enthusiastic, people standing at end of sets, bursts of applause in the middle of numbers and all these things that are the marks of appreciation over there. For me, being all geared-up after months of practising these devilish Scott numbers and then getting away with substituting most of them for crowd-pleasers, it felt at first like the floor was disappearing from under you, but who am I to judge - after all, it was the Carthagenians own affair, and should be done to their liking.

Not many ragtime buffs from the big world showed up, with some notable exceptions. A few musicians were also attracted, like Skip Buehling of Eureka Springs, Ark., lugging a beautiful old venerable banjo case with a banjo inside on which he performed the most pleasant renditions of Wenrich rags, of marches and onesteps; picked by hand, with most bass and treble lines clearly audible. Then there was the Etc. String Band who were new to me but who turned me into a devoted follower. They played the concerts and made me ashamed of having top billing. More relaxed than on their album, with a seemingly limitless supply of these old cakewalks and rags. As for style and authenticity; well, as far as I am concerned, just listen to them, fill in needle scratch and you have a 1909 Edison Bell Record by a small-town Saturday dance trio. As an extra bonus these people turned out to be (a) nice and (b) decidedly scholarly in their interests and (c) the most incredibly shy people I've ever met, which of course is a hallmark of anybody that has something (in contrast to us second-handers who have to wave banners every time we happen to accomplish something). All in all, the ECSB was a treat.

I didn't tell you about us highlighters performing, but you all know Bob Darch, and Susan had improved with a very deft approach and expanded repertoire which by now includes a very life-like Crazy Blues lifted off the Eubie Blake roll and I was once again the unsmiling European with the classical touch, there to inspire more awe than love, I guess.

A beautiful program was printed, and the local Carthage Press came out with a concert issue, really well done with a lot of material on Carthage in bygone days, ragtime, Scott and Woods. Clarence Woods was of course a well-known Carthagenian, being active up to his death in the late fifties, but my guess is that James Scott will remain more of a shadowy figure for the local citizens. Some efforts have been done to retain the memory of him, like putting a slab of Carthage marble in the pavement outside the building that once housed the music store from which emanated part of his music. But he is far from a folk hero yet - and after all, he was from Neosho and he moved to Kansas City. His relatives in town are fairly distant but seem to take some pride in him; his only surviving sister was too frail to attend the concerts but other members of her family did.

However, one link with the Scott past was unearthed through the efforts of the Carthage Press music editor. This link is Mrs. Noble Huggins, who recalls that when her parents bought a new piano in 1915, none other than James Scott was one of the piano movers. And not only that, but after installing the piano Scott and his companions were all invited to dinner, after which Scott taught Mrs. Huggins the C major chord, played some of his compositions and presented her with his latest effort, the Evergreen Rag. The story was confirmed by the very amiable Hugginses when visited by Susan and me. She still has the piano, a big upright with a rich sound, and it was of course an exciting feeling doing the Evergreen on this very one. Of course I asked Mrs. Huggins if she remembered anything of Scott's style or manner of playing, and she said he played pretty straightforward and fast, that is, in a brisk danceable tempo. Both the Hugginses stressed the fact that this music was used for dancing, and so the tempo should suit. Mrs. Huggins confided that she is no die-hard ragtime fan. She likes playing the blues, and does, with big, broad chording somewhat in the 1920's player piano style.

There were also outdoor concerts, a mock New Orleans funeral featuring a good local dixieland band, flag displays and a general attitude throughout the community to make the most of it. Maybe lack of sufficient advance advertising was what kept out-of-towners from coming: I really don't know, but in retrospect I enjoyed the affair, though it will probably not develop into a recurring event.

On my way back I spent a nice day in New York, an hour with Max and Norma Morath which is always an uplifting experience, and an unbelievable evening out in Brooklyn with an old man who thinks that the proper thing for a guy of 93 is sitting up all night talking, playing unbelievable piano and in general acting half his age. The next time you see Eubie Blake, ask him to play the Tannhauser Pilgrim's March. I know it is being less than original to say it, but the man is a wonder, as a human being, as an artist.

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H. CLARENCE WOODS - a biography by Marvin Vangilder of Carthage Press

A friend and co-worker of Jimmy Scott during the teen years they shared on the streets of Carthage and particularly at the Dumars Music Co. store and Lakeside Park, H. Clarence Woods produced some of the most melodic of all ragtime scores.

No collection of the best examples of the mode is complete without his Slippery Elm Rag and Sleepy Hollow Rag, both of which are unique works of outstanding merit.

For a number of years he was billed in show business publications as "the Ragtime Wonder of the South."

Son of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Woods, H. Clarence Woods was born June 19, 1888, at Blue Earth, Ohio. When he was a small child the family moved to Joplin and he began his education in the Joplin schools.

It was during his earlier elementary school years that the family moved to Carthage where Clarence completed his education.

The father was a skilled blacksmith, a trade much in demand during that era, and operated his own shop many years at several different Carthage sites.

Clarence was the first of five children in the family. His brothers were Claude and Bryan Woods, both of whom also engaged as adults in various aspects of show business. Bryan Woods for many years was owner-manager of a dog and pony circus based in Texas.

The sisters were Gladys Woods Moffett and Marguerite Woods Williams, both of whom resided many years as adults in Carthage.

Clarence Woods' interest in the piano became evident when he was about eight years old and attending elementary school here.

He became a student of Miss Emma Johns (DeArmond), for many years the leading keyboard performer and music educator of Carthage and the region, at the Johns home at the southeast corner of Macon Street and Garrison Avenue in the building which now, much remodeled, houses the Ulmer Funeral Home.

Interestingly, Oct. 4, 1956, the funeral service for H. Clarence Woods, prior to burial in Park Cemetery here, was conducted in the same room in which he had his first piano lessons.

Like Jimmy Scott, with whom he occasionally shared practice sessions, Woods was inspired not only by the expert direction of his teacher but also by the sound of the Carthage Light Guard Band and the atmosphere of the Dumars store and the bubbling pot-pourri of entertainment at Lakeside Park.

It is now known at what age he first began experimenting with composition but it undoubtedly was at an early age. His first published score, the Meteor March dedicated to the Frisco Railroad, was completed by the time he reached his 16th birthday and published only a few months later, in the fall of 1903, by the Dumars firm.

A bit later, early in 1904, the young musician's life direction was established, possibly by the hand of fate.

The Bleeding Hearts Stock Co., a drama troupe, arrived in Carthage for a tent show and lacking a piano player.

Woods was recruited for the job and when the troupers departed for the next stand on their journey over the Midwest, he accompanied them as a regular.

The troupers disbanded in 1905 at Leavenworth, Kan., and young Woods obtained employment as silent film pianist for a Leavenworth theater.

While working there, he met Miss Marie Geveke, who on Jan. 22, 1907 became his wife. Through the help of fellow entertainers on the vaudeville circuit, Woods soon was signed as keyboard artist at the Majestic Theater, Fort Worth, Tex.

There he provided accompaniments and mood music for vaudeville performers and became intimately acquainted with many of the nation's leading headliners.

Somewhat later, Woods organized and directed a dance orchestra and quickly became quite popular, particularly in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

During that time, he continued with his work in musical composition, experimenting with ragtime, the march and the blues.

His successful Slippery Elm Rag was published in 1912 by Bush and Gerts Piano Co., Dallas, Tex.

Woods' Graveyard Blues was published by Emil Seidel, Indianapolis, Ind., and his memorable Sleepy Hollow Rag was issued in 1918 by Will L. Livernash Music Co., Kansas City.

On the Sleepy Hollow score, the composer offered this sage advice:

"This number is a decided novelty and should be played slow and soft. Particular attention should be paid to the sustained notes and tremolos. They can be made to stand out without forcing them."

Suggesting a method of simplifying the work, Woods added, "This number can be played for anything except a waltz by slightly altering the style and tempo...."

Woods performed as both band leader and solo entertainer in theaters and clubs throughout the Southwestern states.

In late 1916, an Austin, Tex., newsman reported Woods' appearance at that city's Majestic Theater and observed he was "called the Ragtime Wonder of the South and well deserves that title because he just makes that piano talk."

With the approach of American involvement in World War I, Woods returned to Carthage with his wife and young son H. Clarence "Duke" Woods Jr., thinking of leaving them here with his parents while he departed for military service.

However, his name was not called by the draft board and he utilized the waiting

period by serving as pianist at the Sho-To-All Theater on the west side of the 400 block of South Main Street.

After the war, the traveling Carthaginian served as theater manager and also as performing musician at Webb City, Nevada and Sedalia.

He was an active participant in affairs of the American Federation of Musicians.

During his years as a theater musician and manager, Carthage's Clarence Woods expanded his musical skills initially acquired with aid of music educators in Carthage and Chicago to include mastery of the console of the traditional theater pipe organ.

In 1923, when he left a managerial post at Sedalia he moved to Tulsa, Okla., and became organist for Tulsa's Majestic Theater, one of four such facilities in the Oklahoma city owned by Ralph Talbot.

Talbot later built the Ritz Theater in Tulsa and Woods also performed there as organist.

It was during the 1920s that sound tracks were added to moving pictures and as the decade neared its conclusion the need for organists and pianists to provide background for silent films dwindled. Orchestras employed for that purpose by some of the larger theaters were among the first to go.

In some instances the keyboard artists were kept on the payrolls to assist with short subjects which had no sound tracks or with the few older silent films still occasionally shown.

Woods was among the last such performers, continuing to work in Tulsa theaters until about 1931.

His theater work finally concluded, he became organist for the Tulsa Coliseum for hockey games and public ice skating parties. When the first Shipstad & Johnson Ice Show was created in Tulsa Woods helped write the musical score.

In addition he became a radio entertainer, directing the Imperial Ensemble for a thrice-weekly show on KTUL.

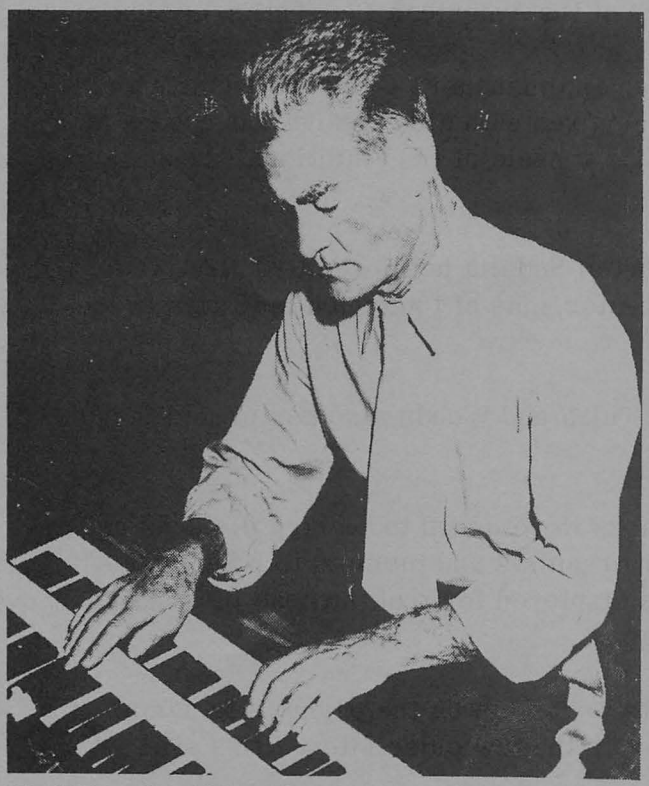
During his several years in Tulsa, he also did much additional composing and served as an arranger for many groups.

According to the son H. Clarence Woods Jr., "During this time his proudest achievement was the writing of the official march for the Oklahoma Military Academy at Claremore."

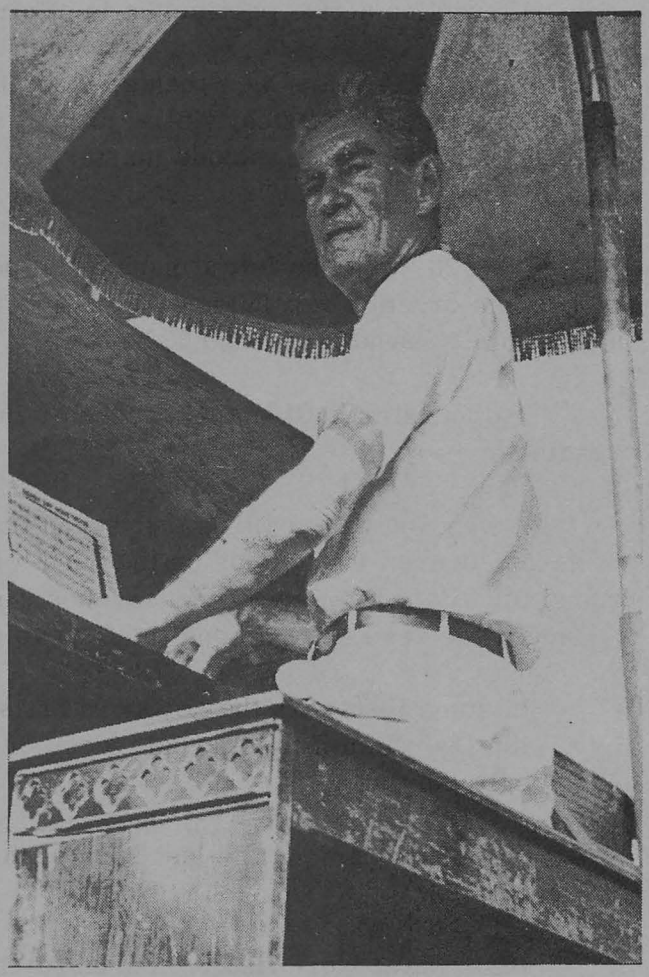
Beginning in 1949, Woods traveled four years with the Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey Circus as chief organist, composer and arranger, serving a key role in providing colorful background music for the various circus acts.

Interestingly the big circus also was the showplace for another musical giant from the Tri-State District, Merle Evans of Columbus, Kan., who was bandmaster.

Ragtimer Clarence Woods left the circus in 1953, accepting semi-retirement and making his home in Dallas, Tex., where he worked part-time in the office of the Dallas local of the American Federation of Musicians.



AT THE CIRCUS—The big capable hands of Clarence Woods, famed Carthage keyboard artist and composer, caress the keys of a Ringling Brothers-Barnum & Bailey organ under the big top during the final stages of his long career of musical service. The picture is from the collection of his son Clarence Woods Jr., Moline, Ill.



WOODS PERFORMS—Shielded by a canopy, Carthage's Clarence Woods performs at the piano while working as staff musician with the Ringling Brothers—Barnum & Bailey Circus shortly before his retirement in 1953. Woods long was heralded as "The Ragtime Wonder of the South." This photo is from the collection of Clarence Woods Jr., Moline, Ill

During a portion of the 1955 season, he returned to the circus to assist when another keyboard performer became ill.

Stricken with illness in August, 1956, he went to the home of his son in Davenport, Iowa.

There, after surgery and brief hospitalization he died Sept. 30, 1956.

Funeral services were held at the Ulmer Funeral Home and burial was in Park Cemetery here.

Mrs. Woods, 88, resides in a retirement home at Washington, Iowa.

Their son, a veteran newspaperman, currently is director of special services for The Daily Dispatch, Moline, Ill.

In correspondence regarding his father, H. Clarence Woods Jr. said attempts to recover some of the priceless Woods manuscripts have met with difficulty.

"My father was the type who did not believe in saving anything," he said. "Consequently he had no interest in preserving his music. At the time of his death his complete worldly possessions fit neatly and easily into a small suitcase...."

"He was pretty camera shy and usually wanted to be the guy who wrote the music, not the one out there taking the bows." Nevertheless Clarence Woods will live on through his musical works and the memory of those glorious days when he was known as The Ragtime Wonder of the South.

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JAMES S. SCOTT a biography by Marvin Vangilder of Carthage Press

Born in 1886 at Neosho, James Sylvester "Jimmy" Scott Jr. was the second of the six children of James Sylvester Scott and Molly Thomas Scott.

The other family members, all born at Neosho to the former slave couple, were Lena, the eldest, and, in descending order following Jimmy, Douglas, Oliver, Bessie and Howard.

Sole survivor at this writing is Bessie - Bessie Anna Geneva Scott Farris, who resides at 841 E. 6th St., in the same neighbourhood where all six resided during their childhood.

Fascinated with musical sounds, which had a magnetic and emotional appeal, and taking full use of his native power of perfect pitch, Jimmy began pecking out tunes on a neighbor's piano while still a pre-schooler.

The folk song carried by his parents from the plantations of North Carolina, the Ozark Mountain tunes of English and Scotch origin used by many of his Caucasian neighbors and the coarse mining songs emanating from Neosho's saloons were his merely by hearing them. All became part of a storehouse of exciting sounds locked into his agile brain for future reference, as well as for repetition every time he had an opportunity to borrow a keyboard.

His sense of pitch was so remarkable that even at the beginning he was able to duplicate full chords rather than individual notes. At the pleasant task of "playing by ear" he was an instant expert although at that point written musical scores had no meaning for him.

Fortunately, Neosho's black community of that day included an expert pianist, John Coleman.

Recognizing the genius of little Jimmy, Coleman freely provided formal music lessons, dealing with notation, rhythmic patterns, fingering techniques and classic compositions.

The youngster was a quick student and, in spite of the difficulty caused by having no piano in the home, was diligent at practice, so much that by the time he reached his teens he was one of the most skillful pianists in the region.

About 1899, when Jimmy was 13 and also the year that Scott Joplin's Maple Leaf Rag became a nationwide hit, the Scott family moved to Ottawa, Kan.

In the Southeast Kansas community, the schoolboy genius began serious composition, learning by doing the use of the march, song, waltz and ragtime forms.

His first compositions were played on a cabinet parlor organ at the Ottawa home of his first cousin Ruth Callahan. Another cousin was Ada Brown, who became a noted blues singer.

The wheezy instrument, which produced its reedy sound via a bellows for which air was supplied by constant pumping action of the performer's feet, was not particularly suited to the brilliant sounds of rag or the march. However, never one to be concerned about handicaps, which he shrugged aside as inconsequential, young Scott used the instrument effectively to produce some of the finest musical sounds in the history of mankind.

The thing which mattered, as with any true musician, was not the quality of the mechanical device but the quality and the dedication of the human hands and heart and soul which manipulated it.

When the Scott and Callahan families moved back to Missouri and specifically to Carthage, the old worn parlor organ was among the few cherished possessions transported with care on the trip.

For Jimmy, its four-octave keyboard represented the gateway to greatness.

About 1901, former slaves James Sylvester Scott Sr. and Molly Thomas Scott moved with their six children from Ottawa, Kan., to a permanent Carthage home in a frame residence at Fifth and Valley Streets.

The building no longer stands but music born there out of the bubbling heart and soul of James Sylvester Scott Jr. continues to supply testimony to the spiritual wealth of the Carthage environment.

Carthage at the dawn of the new century was a beehive of enthusiasm, economically, educationally and socially. It had acquired a metropolitan air along with widely-shared visions of future metropolitan stature.

Towering above the city in majestic splendor was the magnificent marble castle erected only six years previously to serve as the Jasper County Courthouse. Governmental center of an area stimulated by a seemingly endless supply of wealth being dredged out of the earth by miners and quarrymen, the edifice was a busy place surrounded by enterprising business firms which sparkled with innovative advertising and promotional displays.

Great clouds of black coal smoke issued from the stacks atop the imposing structure high above the Carthage square to engulf the gas lighted streets below where throngs of horse-drawn buggies and wagons seasoned by an occasional sputtering horseless carriage transported an energetic populace to places of commerce, worship, learning and entertainment.

Northeast of the courthouse, the elegant Harrington House hotel attracted noted travelers from throughout the world. To the south, the new Delphus Theater drew both vaudeville headliners and the miraculous new silent but fascinating celluloid marvels which were cast upon a screen in flickering black and white excitement.

Scattered throughout the downtown area were a number of saloons where men of the community sought escape from their frantic labors - escape into alcohol-induced euphoria or into the glow of music supplied by itinerant entertainers such as pianist Blind Boone.

Electric-powered trolleys made frequent stops on regular schedule in the shadow of the courthouse.

It was possible for an enterprising youngster who could scrape up a single coin at some task such as carrying bags for visitors at the Harrington to board a car there and travel quickly to the wonderland of Lakeside Park west of Carthage on Center Creek or to the bustling excitement of Prosperity, Carterville, Webb City, Joplin or other booming mining camps.

At Lakeside he was likely to hear the sparkling music of such expert keyboard performers as Percy Wenrich, the celebrated Joplin Kid who already was gaining national notice.

If the coin was not readily available, the youngster could stroll the few blocks to City (Central) Park and thrill to the spectacular sounds of the prize-winning Carthage Light Guard Band directed by Charlie Dumars.

Enrolled at segregated Lincoln School, teenager Jimmy Scott, nearing the end of his formal education, plunged exuberantly into the exciting entertainment possibilities of his new home.

He enjoyed the music but, more importantly, he set out at once to improve it.

At age 15, Jimmy Scott already was a dramatically skillful entertainer hailed by veteran performers at the Lakeside Park pavilion west of Carthage as a welcome addition to their corps.

He eagerly accepted their invitations to sit in between acts at the piano or the

keyboard of Lakeside's crowdpleasing steam calliope, where his artistry drew applause and admiration but unfortunately, no income.

Back home in the frame residence at Fifth and Valley Streets, his father had managed after many months of sacrifice to install a used upright piano.

Mrs. Scott and all the children shared use of the instrument - all except Jimmy playing limited folk tunes and dance rhythms by ear - and the home became a neighborhood music center.

Jimmy played from the most difficult musical scores available, including the works of Bach and Brahms as well as those of Scott Joplin and Tom Turpin. In addition, he was writing his own scores and experimenting at the keyboard with various ragtime themes.

Other young pianists, both black and white, frequently gathered at the Scott home to share in the excitement of Jimmy's creations, to marvel at his perfect pitch games and to compare techniques in friendly competition.

It was a happy life for young Jimmy and his brothers and sisters but poverty - in the midst of community plenty - was a constantly worrisome presence.

Jimmy therefore sought employment.

It was an era when jobs were plentiful. Young men were employed as laborers in the quarries and the mines, as bellhops at the Harrington and smaller hotels, as swampers at the saloons, as piece workers at the numerous Carthage industrial plants, as grooms and smith's helpers in the livery stables, as carriers for The Carthage Press or The Carthage Democrat, as farm laborers or as retail clerks.

But Jimmy - probably in part due to the color of his skin but also in part due to his penchant for mounting the cars and taking off for Lakeside at every opportunity found no job was readily available.

Consequently at age 15 he began working in association with a now unidentified Carthage barber as a shoeshine boy. At his full adult height of five feet, four inches, he probably matched the traditional caricature of a typical shine boy.

However, in other ways he certainly was not typical.

Apparently he supplemented his meager income by playing piano at various saloons in return for any coins patrons chose to toss into the kitty.

He sat at the keyboard with his left leg wrapped around a leg of the stool or bench and bounced up and down with the beat as he played, his short square fingers literally flying over the keys as he attempted to squeeze the greatest possible number of notes into the space of each beat.

While thus occupied, he was lost to the world and the sordid environment around him, totally absorbed with the wonder of his music.

Dissatisfied with the income from his work as a shoeshine boy, Jimmy Scott paced the streets of Carthage near the beginning of the 20th century in search of more lucrative employment.

A quiet, serious teenager, he was small for his age, and except when seated at the keyboard, emotionally withdrawn. A studious introvert on all other occasions, when he went to the keyboard he became a flashing smiling, bouncing extrovert who sought and gained the attention of all.

Because music was the center of his being, he naturally was drawn to the Dumars Music Co. store, then at 109 S. Main St., just south of Main and Central and near the Karr (Jackson) Hotel.

There Charles Dumars, director of the Carthage Light Guard Band and a widely respected musician and the members of his staff displayed the latest sheet music, along with glittering racks of violins, flutes, banjos, cornets, clarinets, accordians, harmonicas, player piano rolls and assorted other articles of musical necessity.

Decorative picture frames were a non-musical specialty. The rear room was filled with pianos and parlor organs.

In 1902, Dumars hired the dusky, diminutive 16-year-old Scott as a kind of general flunky at the store.

Jimmy washed windows and swept out the store daily, helped arrange promotional displays, dusted shelves and was assigned as a trainee at the craft of picture framing.

At every opportunity, the teenager slipped into the back room and applied his skill to the keyboard instruments stocked there.

When Dumars heard the brilliant sounds from the back room penetrating through the entire building, he immediately recognized the presence of genius.

Scott was reassigned as sales clerk, instrumental demonstrator and song plugger. There was a measurable increase in business volume and many persons came to the store merely for the thrill of hearing Jimmy play.

His own compositions were among the most popular of the works he played and requests for printed copies of Scott tunes were received in growing numbers. It was then that Dumars began to consider the possibility of expanding into the publishing field.

With Dumars' help, Scott obtained supplementary employment - this time with salary - at the Delphus Theater and at Lakeside Park.

His fame grew rapidly and more mature pianists began to visit Carthage to hear him play and to discuss techniques and future developments in the entertainment business. Through these valuable contacts, he gained acquaintances which would lead to an expanded audience throughout the region and particularly in Kansas City.

The brilliant career of the Crown Prince of Ragtime was launched.

(To be continued in a future issue.)

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SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - at the Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto - in "The Piano Bar" Mon. to Fri. 5:00 p. m. to 8:00 p. m. and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" Lounge Mon. to Sat. 9:00 p. m. to 1:00 a. m.

EUBIE BLAKE - The DEAN of RAGTIME - This popular recording artist and composer performs frequently at Concerts and Festivals. Does guest appearances on T. V. talk shows and is often to be heard on radio programs (watch your local press music programs for dates).

STEEN CHRISTENSEN - at the Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrogade 150, Copenhagen (Denmark), every 2nd & 4th Wednesday each month.

BOB DURST - (RAJAH OF RAGTIME) plays ragtime piano on the Holiday Inn circuit thru the middle U. S.

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ - plays solo ragtime piano and with bands - regularly on tour in Denmark. (Recently in Frankfurt, Germany.)

DAVE FLOWITT - at DJ's Tavern & Rest., Cor. University Ave. & College, Toronto. Solo piano Sat. 4:30 to 7:30 p. m. Watch for gigs with Dr. McJazz Band.

"GASLIGHT" GALE FOEHNER - at Rochester, N. Y. - Regularly performing ragtime and sing-a-longs with slides at concerts and private party engagements.

RALPH GRUGEL - and The Eagle Jazz Band at East Shore Club, Lakeshore Drive, Cleveland, Ohio, Fri. and Sat.

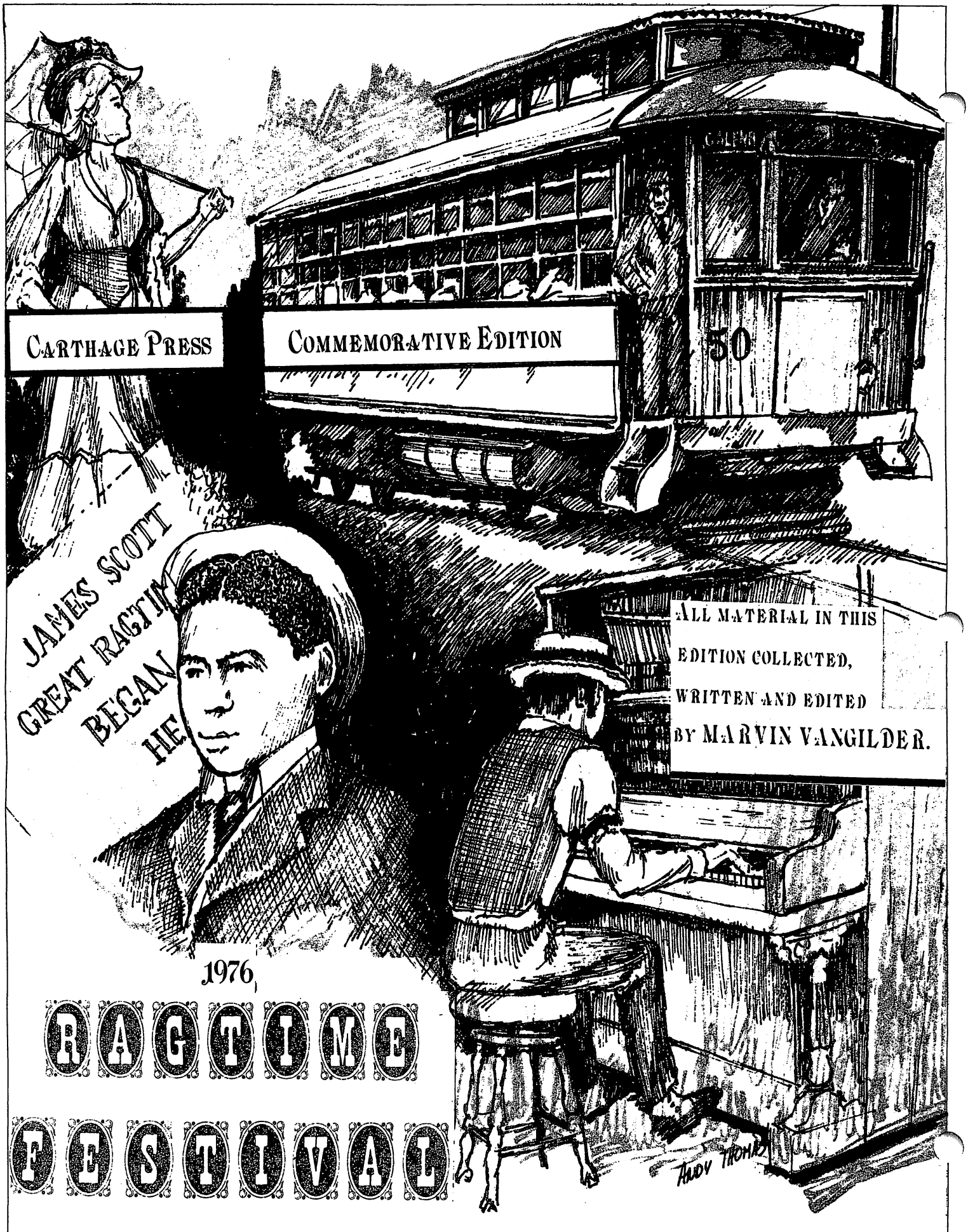
JOHN HASSE - at The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana, Fri. and Sat. nights.

JIM HESSION - at the Polynesian Hotel (Tambu Lounge), Disney World, Orlando, Florida - six nights a week.

JIM KAPLAN - at the Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

JOHN MADDOX	- at Cherry Creek Inn, 600 So. Colorado Blvd., Denver, Col. Sept. 20 to Oct. 16. - at Heritage Motor Inn, 1700 Fox Farm Road, Great Falls, Montana from Oct. 18 to Nov. 13. - at Northern Hotel, Billings, Montana from Nov. 15 to Dec. 18.
KEN MAYHERCY	- (RAGTIME $ BILL) - at Signal Hill Supper Club, Craig., Col. for summer.
GLENN MEYER	- and his band at St. Louis, Mo., making regular appearances.
BOB MILNE	- at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich. Mon. thru Sat. 7:30 to 12:00 p. m.
MIKE MONTGOMERY	- at The Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, John R. Road north of McNichols, Detroit, Michigan, Friday nights.
MAX MORATH	- on the road with his new show "The Ragtime Years".
DR. ELI NEWBERGER	- and The New Black Eagle Jazz Band at the Stickey Wicket Pub, West Main Street, Hopkinton, Mass., Thursday 8:00 p. m. to 12:00 p. m. (Pianist is Bob Pilsbury).
TOM NOEL	- on the road with his living portrayal shows "Mark Twain at Home", and "Mr. Jelly Lord" based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.
CHARLIE RASCH	- with SISTER KATE, at the Cow Palace, Bancroft Road about 8 miles west of Toledo, Ohio, Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 p. m. on.
HANK ROSS	- with Red Onion Jazz Band, at O'Connor's Beef'n Ale House, 708 Mountain Blvd., Watchung, N. J. Friday nights at 7:30 p. m. on.
TOM SCHMUTZLER	- with banjoist Harry Malfas, the Hardware City Temperance & Ragtime Society at the One Way Fare, Simsbury, Ct. Sun. nights. Also touring schools in southern New England with his own presentation "Our Ragtime Heritage".
BOB SEELEY	- at Clamdiggers Rest., 30555 Grand River, Farmington (Detroit), Mich. Mon. thru Fri. 4:00 to 7:00 p. m.
DAN SUMMERS	- and New Charleston Chasers regularly appearing in the Buffalo area.
TREBOR TICHENOR	- on The Goldenrod Showboat, at St. Louis, Missouri. Does weekly radio show on KWMU - FM 90. 7 called "RAGOPHILE with Trebor Tichenor", Fridays at 6:00 p. m.
TERRY WALDO	- has weekly half hour radio show "THIS IS RAGTIME" on National Public Radio - Check your local listing.
TEX WYNDHAM	- and The Red Lion Jazz Band, doing playing dates in the Wilmington, Delaware area.
BILL ZINN	- and Zinn's Ragtime String Quartet doing Concerts and College dates in the New York area.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.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